

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 AGRE-00 AID-05
CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 EPG-02 COME-00
DLOS-09 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05
FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OES-07 OMB-01 PA-01
PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /125 W
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R 080756Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4043
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 3174

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, NO
SUBJECT: NORWEGIAN-SOVIET FISHERIES ACCORD RAISES STINK

REFS: OSLO 2963

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE PUBLICATION THIS WEEK OF THE DRAFT NORWEGIAN-SOVIET FISHERIES ACCORD HAS CONSIDERABLY LIVENED THE LOCAL POLITICAL SCENE. THE AGREEMENT IS GENERALLY ASSESSED AS EVEN MORE UNBALANCED IN FAVOR OF THE USSR, THAN HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED, THEREBY PROVOKING STRONG NON-SOCIALIST ATTACKS ON THE ACCORD AND THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HANDLING OF IT. LABOR WILL NOW TRY TO DEFUSE IT AS AN ELECTION ISSUE, THOUGH TO DO SO RUNS A RISK OF EXACERBATING ALREADY-COOL NORWEGIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER BRIEFING THE RELEVANT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON JULY 1 THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLISHED THE TEXT OF THE PROPOSED FISHERY AGREEMENT WITH THE USSR WHICH NORWAY'S MINISTER EVENSEN HAD INITIALED WITH SOVIET FISHERIES MINISTER ISHKOV IN MOSCOW (OSLO 2963). AS EXPECTED THE AGREEMENT IS UNBALANCED IN FAVOR OF THE USSR, THOUGH
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MORE SO THAN MOST OBSERVERS HAD ANTICIPATED. WE UNDERSTAND THAT EVENSEN INITIALED THE ACCORD WITHOUT HIS GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL.

3. THE PUBLISHED AD REFERENDUM AGREEMENT TAKES THE FORM OF AN EXCHANGE OF LETTERS TO WHICH A PROTOCOL AND MAPS AND COORDINATES OF THE NEWLY-DESIGNATED GREY ZONE ARE ATTACHED. THE LETTERS STIPULATE THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF THE AGREEMENT PENDING DELIMINATION OF THE

NORWEGIAN/SOVIET CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY AND STATE THAT NOTHING IN THE AGREEMENT SHALL PREJUDICE THE LOCATION OF THAT BOUNDARY. THE PROTOCOL CONTAINS PROVISIONS FOR THIRD COUNTRY FISHING IN THE ZONE AND PROVIDES THAT NORWAY SHALL POLICE NORWEGIAN SHIPS, THE USSR SOVIET SHIPS, AND BOTH COUNTRIES THIRD COUNTRY VESSELS. THE MAPS AND COORDINATES DELIMIT THE GREY ZONE. (AN EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF THE NORWEGIAN LETTER AND PROTOCOL AS WELL AS THE COORDINATES AND COPIES OF THE MAP ISSUED BY THE GON SHOWING THE GREY ZONE ARE BEING SENT BY SEPARATE AIRGRAM.)

4. THE NEWLY-DESIGNATED GREY ZONE ENCOMPASSES AN AREA OF 67,500 SQUARE KILOMETERS OF WHICH 23,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS LIE TO THE WEST OF THE SOVIET SECTOR LINE BOUNDARY CLAIM, 41,500 SQUARE KILOMETERS LIE BETWEEN THE SOVIET SECTOR LINE AND THE NORWEGIAN MEDIAN LINE BOUNDARY CLAIMS, AND 3,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS LIE TO THE EAST OF THE NORWEGIAN MEDIAN LINE BOUNDARY CLAIM. (NOTE THE ORIGINAL DISPUTED AREA BETWEEN THE MEDIAN AND SECTOR LINES ENCOMPASSED 60,000 SQUARE KILOMETERS.) THE AREA TO THE NORTHEAST OF THE GREY ZONE AND LYING BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND NORWEGIAN 200-MILE CLAIM (THE SOVIET 200-MILE CLAIM IS SOUTH OF THAT OF NORWAY) BECOMES OPEN SEAS. THE SOUTHERN AND EASTERN CORNERS OF THE TRIANGLE FORMED BY THE NORWEGIAN AND SOVIET BOUNDARY CLAIMS ON THE EAST AND WEST AND THE SOVIET 200-MILE CLAIM ON THE NORTH BECOME, ACCORDING TO NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES, SOVIET FISHING WATERS UNDER THE AGREEMENT, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT SPECIFICALLY SPELLED OUT IN THE AGREEMENT.

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5. THE NET EFFECT OF THE DRAFT ACCORD IS TO MOVE THE ENTIRE DISPUTED AREA DECIDEDLY TO THE WEST, FOR NOT ONLY HAS NORWAY GIVEN THE SOVIETS A CONSIDERABLE TOEHOLD WEST OF THE SECTOR LINE, THEY HAVE ALSO GIVEN UP NORWEGIAN JURISDICTION FOR FISHING IN A LARGE AREA WEST OF THE MEDIAN LINE. IN RETURN, THE GON CAN ARGUE THAT IT ACHIEVED SYMBOLIC SOVIET ADMISSION THAT THERE IS A DISPUTED AREA AT ALL, THAT NORWAY CAN CLAIM LIMITED FISHING JURISDICTION EAST OF THE MEDIAN LINE, AND THAT NORWEGIAN FISHING INTERESTS IN THE BOUNDARY AREA ARE SATISFACTORILY ACCOMMODATED. HOWEVER, THE OVERALL RESULT IS THAT A LINE DRAWN TO BISECT THE NEW GREY ZONE WOULD GIVE NORWAY 35 PERCENT OF THE ORIGINAL DISPUTED AREA BETWEEN ITS MEDIAN LINE CLAIM AND THE USSR'S SECTOR LINE CLAIM AND THE USSR 65 PERCENT, AS THE PRESS HAS BEEN QUICK TO NOTE. THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT, THEREFORE, THAT THE AGREEMENT WOULD SERIOUSLY PREJUDICE THE ULTIMATE BOUNDARY DELIMITATION BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE USSR, REGARDLESS OF STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY IN THE PROTOCOLS.

6. RECOGNIZING A POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE ELECTION ISSUE, THE LABOR PARTY HAS HASTENED TO HEAD OFF CRITICISM OF THE AGREEMENT. PRIME MINISTER NORDLI IMMEDIATELY STATED UPON PUBLICATION OF THE

ACCORD THAT HIS GOVERNMENT NEEDED MORE TIME BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER TO ACCEPT IT OR NOT. (WE UNDERSTAND THE SOVIETS HAVE ALSO BEEN SO INFORMED PRIVATELY.) NORDLI ALSO STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF THE PRESENT LOS CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK BEFORE DECIDING, APPARENTLY BECAUSE THE CONFERENCE MAY LEAD TO A WEAKENING OF THE MEDIAN LINE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH NORWAY'S BOUNDARY CLAIM IS BASED. THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY BRIEF THE STORTING AGAIN ON ITS HANDLING OF THE ISSUE IN MID-JULY.

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INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OSLO 3174

7. MEANWHILE IN ONE FELL SWOOP, JENS EVENSEN ACCOMPLISHED WHAT MOST OBSERVERS AND NON-SOCIALISTS WERE BEGINNING TO THINK WAS IMPOSSIBLE-- THE APPARENT UNITY OF THE NON-SOCIALISTS AROUND A SINGLE ISSUE. THE THREE MAJOR NON-SOCIALIST PARTIES HAVE IN VARYING DEGREES ALL CRITICIZED THE AGREEMENT, EVENSEN'S HANDLING OF IT AND THE LABOR PARTY. TO DATE ONLY THE FAR LEFT SV PARTY HAS SUPPORTED IT. AND THOUGH THE ACCORD COULD PERHAPS WIN LABOR SOME FISHERMEN'S VOTES IN THE NORTH, IT MIGHT WILL LOSE MORE VOTES ON BALANCE IF THE NON-SOCIALISTS CAN PORTRAY THE ACCORD AS A SELL-OUT OF NORWEGIAN INTERESTS. THE NON-SOCIALISTS CAN THEREFORE BE EXPECTED TO BEAT THE DRUM ON THE ISSUE AND THE CONSERVATIVES WILL CALL THE AGREEMENT A GIVE AWAY FOR AS LONG AS IT IS AN OPEN QUESTION--AND LONGER IF THE GON GOES THROUGH WITH THE ACCORD.

8. THE LABOR PARTY'S LIKELY STRATEGY IS CLEAR: IT WOULD PREFER TO POSTPONE A FINAL DECISION ON THE ACCORD UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS. THAT WAY, THE NON-SOCIALISTS CAN BE DEPRIVED OF THE

ONLY REAL ISSUE THEY HAVE FOUND TO DATE. MEANWHILE, THE GON
WILL PROBABLY TRY TO WORK OUT A TACIT "INTERIM-INTERIM"
FISHERIES ACCORD WITH THE SOVIETS TO TIDE THEM OVER TO SEPTEMBER.
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9. BUT IF LABOR'S STRATEGY IS CLEAR,SO IS ITS DILEMMA: FOR IT
CAN ONLY PUSH THE ISSUE OFF TO THE FALL AT THE RISK OF FURTHER
EXACERBATING NORWAY'S RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. AFTER ALL, A
NORWEGIAN CABINET MINISTER DID INITIAL THE ACCORD--GOOD OR BAD.
AND, IF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS CANNOT ARRIVE AT A FISHERIES ACCORD
NOW, THERE IS ALWAYS THE CHANCE--EVEN THE LIKELIHOOD--THAT
THE SOVIETS WILL PROVOKE FURTHER INCIDENTS IN THE DISPUTED AREA
IN THE MONTHS AHEAD, DURING WHICH TIME THE GON MAY ALSO SEE GENERAL
INTERNATIONAL SUPPOR ITS BOUNDARY POSITION WEAKENING. ONE
LABOR PARTY STALWART EXPRESSED HIS FEAR THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT
SIMPLY START ENFORCING SOVIET JURISDICTION AS FAR WEST AS THE
SECTOR LINE AGAINST ALL FISHING VESSELS, INCLUDING NORWEGIANS,
"THEN," AS HE LAMENTED, "WHAT ARE WE TO DO? SEND OUR NAVY AGAINST
THEIRS IN MURMANSK?" ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE LABOR PARTY CENTRAL
COMMITTEE NOTES, HOWEVER, THAT ALMOST NOTHING WOULD BE MORE CERTAIN
TO RALLY THE COUNTRY BEHIND NORDLI AND HIS GOVERNMENT THAN SOVIET
PRESSURE TACTICS. WE ARE INCLINED TO AGREE.
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Message Attributes

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